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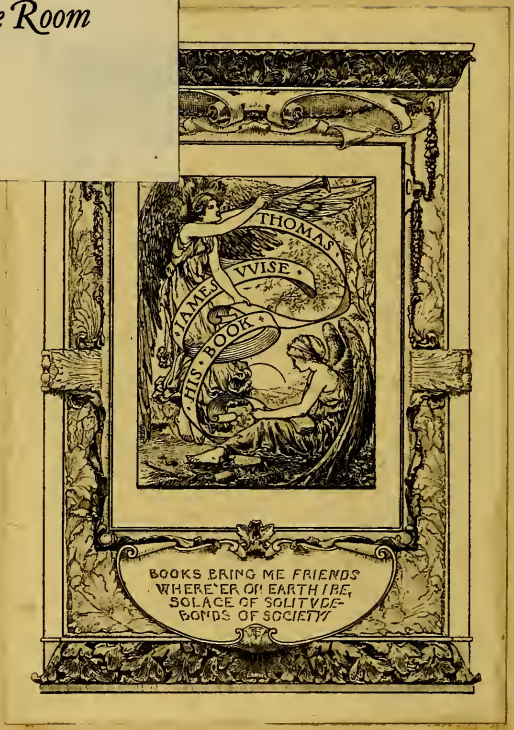

——— Monody / On the Death of / The Right Honourable / R. B. Sheridan, / Written at the request of a Friend, / To be spoken at / Drury Lane Theatre. / London: / Printed for John Murray, Albemarle Street. / 1816.

Collation: Demy octavo, pp. 12, consisting of Half-title (with imprint "*London: Printed by C. Roworth, Bell-yard, Temple-bar*" at the foot of the reverse) pp. 1—2; Title-page, as above (with blank reverse), pp. 3—4; and Text of the *Monody* pp. 5—12. There are no head-lines, the pages being numbered centrally in Arabic numerals. There are no signatures.

The *First Edition* and the *First Issue.* Bound in red levant morocco by Riviere, with gilt top, the remaining edges untrimmed. The leaves measure 8¾ × 5½ inches. The paper has no watermark. In later editions the name of Byron as author was added to the title-page.

Of the *First Edition* of the *Monody on the Death of Sheridan* there are two distinct issues. The first issue, described above, has the last four lines of the poem imposed upon page 12, followed by a short double rule. The first line on page 11 reads:

To weep the vanished beam—and add our mite.

In the second issue, described below, page 12 is blank, the letterpress upon page 11 having been sufficiently compressed to accommodate the concluding four lines of verse, and the first line on page 11 reads:

To mourn the vanished beam—and add our mite.

In subsequent editions of the *Monody* this latter reading was preserved. I have seen a copy of the first issue of the book with *mourn* substituted for *weep*, but with the text still extending on to page 12, and have heard of others. Apparently the two changes were introduced successively not simultaneously.

The poem first appeared in *The Courier* for September 11th, 1816; three days earlier than that announced as the date of the publication of the pamphlet.

FOLDOUT BLANK

MONODY,

&c.

[*PRICE ONE SHILLING.*]

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY T. DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

MONODY

ON THE DEATH OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

R. B. SHERIDAN,

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF A FRIEND,

TO BE SPOKEN AT

DRURY LANE THEATRE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1816.

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MONODY.

When the last sunshine of expiring day
In summer's twilight weeps itself away,
Who hath not felt the softness of the hour
Sink on the heart—as dew along the flower?
With a pure feeling which absorbs and awes
While Nature makes that melancholy pause,
Her breathing moment on the bridge where Time
Of light and darkness forms an arch sublime,
Who hath not shared that calm so still and deep,
The voiceless thought which would not speak but
weep, 10

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A holy concord—and a bright regret,
A glorious sympathy with suns that set?
'Tis not harsh sorrow—but a tenderer woe,
Nameless, but dear to gentle hearts below,
Felt without bitterness—but full and clear,
A sweet dejection—a transparent tear
Unmixed with worldly grief—or selfish stain,
Shed without shame—and secret without pain.

Even as the tenderness that hour instills
When Summer's day declines along the hills,
So feels the fulness of our heart and eyes
When all of Genius which can perish—dies.

A mighty Spirit is eclipsed—a Power
Hath passed from day to darkness—to whose hour
Of light no likeness is bequeathed—no name,
Focus at once of all the rays of Fame!
The flash of Wit—the bright Intelligence,
The beam of Song—the blaze of Eloquence,
Set with their Sun—but still have left behind
The enduring produce of immortal Mind,

Fruits of a genial morn, and glorious noon,
A deathless part of him who died too soon.
But small that portion of the wondrous whole,
These sparkling segments of that circling soul,
Which all embraced—and lightened over all,
To cheer—to pierce—to please—or to appall,
From the charmed council—to the festive board
Of human feelings the unbounded lord,
In whose acclaim the loftiest voices vied,
The praised—the proud—who made his praise their pride:
*When the loud cry of trampled Hindostan
Arose to Heaven in her appeal from man,
His was the thunder—his the avenging rod,
The wrath—the delegated voice of God!

* See Fox, Burke, and Pitt's eulogy on Mr. Sheridan's speech on the charges exhibited against Mr. Hastings in the House of Commons. Mr. Pitt entreated the House to adjourn, to give time for a calmer consideration of the question than could then occur after the immediate effect of that oration.

Which shook the nations through his lips—and blazed
Till vanquished senates trembled as they praised.

And here, oh! here, where yet all young and warm
The gay creations of his spirit charm,
The matchless dialogue—the deathless wit
Which knew not what it was to intermit,
The glowing portraits fresh from life that bring
Home to our hearts the truth from which they spring,
These wondrous beings of his Fancy wrought
To fullness by the fiat of his thought,
Here in their first abode you still may meet
Bright with the hues of his Promethean heat,
A halo of the light of other days
Which still the splendour of its orb betrays.

But should there be to whom the fatal blight
Of failing Wisdom yields a base delight,

Men who exult when minds of heavenly tone
Jar in the music which was born their own,
Still let them pause—Ah! little do they know
That what to them seemed Vice might be but Woe.

Hard is his fate on whom the public gaze
Is fixed for ever to detract or praise,
Repose denies her requiem to his name,
And Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame.
The secret enemy whose sleepless eye
Stands sentinel—accuser—judge—and spy,
The foe—the fool—the jealous—and the vain,
The envious who but breathe in others' pain,
Behold the host! delighting to deprave,
Who track the steps of Glory to the grave,
Watch every fault that daring Genius owes
Half to the ardour which its birth bestows,
Distort the truth—accumulate the lie
And pile the Pyramid of Calumny!

These are his portion—but if joined to these
Gaunt Poverty should league with deep Disease,

If the high Spirit must forget to soar,
And stoop to strive with Misery at the door,
To soothe Indignity—and face to face
Meet sordid Rage—and wrestle with Disgrace,
To find in Hope but the renewed caress,
The serpent-fold of further Faithlessness,—
If such may be the Ills which men assail,
What marvel if at last the mightiest fail?
Breasts to whom all the strength of feeling given
Bear hearts electric—charged with fire from Heaven,
Black with the rude collision—inly torn,
By clouds surrounded, and on whirlwinds borne,
Driven o'er the lowering Atmosphere that nurst
Thoughts which have turned to thunder—scorch —and burst.

But far from us and from our mimic scene
Such things should be—if such have ever been;
Our's be the gentler wish, the kinder task,
To give the tribute Glory need not ask,

To mourn the vanished beam—and add our mite
Of praise in payment of a long delight.

Ye Orators! whom yet our councils yield,
Mourn for the veteran Hero of your field!
The worthy rival of the wondrous *Three!**
Whose words were sparks of Immortality!
Ye Bards! to whom the Drama's Muse is dear,
He was your Master—emulate him *here!*
Ye men of wit and social eloquence!
He was your Brother—bear his ashes hence!
While Powers of Mind almost of boundless range
Complete in kind—as various in their change,
While Eloquence—Wit—Poesy—and Mirth
That humbler Harmonist of care on Earth,
Survive within our souls—while lives our sense
Of pride in Merit's proud pre-eminence,

* Fox—Pitt—Burke.

Long shall we seek his likeness—long in vain,
And turn to all of him which may remain,
Sighing that Nature formed but one such man
And broke the die—in moulding Sheridan! 118